

A GOSPEL SERMON TO OUTSIDERS

NO. 1389

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 19, 1877,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

[Preached on a night when the Tabernacle was free to all comers, the
regular congregation having vacated their seats.]

*“Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you.
Mark 10:49.*

THESE open services, as most of you will judge, are intended to be purely evangelistic. No doubt a large number of believers are here, many of them well-established in the faith, who would like to hear a doctrine argued, a type interpreted, or an apocalyptic symbol unfolded. But really, I cannot attend to you this evening. I feel something like Luther when preaching to a mixed assembly. He said, as nearly as I can remember, words to this effect, “I perceive in the church Dr. Justus Jonas, and Melancthon, and other learned doctors. Now, if I preach to their edification, what is to become of the rest? Therefore, by their leave, I shall forget that Dr. Jonas is here at all, and preach to the multitude.” So must I do at this good hour, asking those of you who are advanced in the divine life to unite your prayers with mine, which will continually ascend, that the word of the gospel may be blessed to the unconverted.

Dear friends, there are so many of you that have been, for years, listening to the proclamation of the gospel. You are dwellers, almost, in Emmanuel's land, but not quite; that is why I feel most earnest that this night should be the time of your decision for the Savior—that you should not remain, any longer, hearers only, but should become *believers*, and afterwards *doers* of the word! There are gentlemen in England who can afford to drive a coach and tour from town to town, and carry nobody, performing their journeys for their own amusement, but I am not able or willing to do anything of that kind. Unless I can have my coach loaded with passengers to heaven, I would sooner it were never started, and had rather my team stayed in the stable. We must carry some souls to heaven, for our call is from above, and our time is too precious to throw away on mere pretense of doing good! We cannot play at preaching; we preach for eternity! We cannot feel satisfied merely to deliver sermons to senseless throngs, or to the most attentive crowds; whatever smiles may greet us as we start, and whatever salutation may welcome us at our close, we are not content unless Jesus works salvation by us! Our desire is that grace should be magnified, and that sinners should be saved! They used to jeer at the Tabernacle in Moorfields, and the one in Tottenham Court Road. They called them Mr. Whitefield's soul traps. A very excellent name for a place of worship! Such may this Tabernacle always be! It ought to be a soul trap, and we shall be disappointed, indeed, if there are not some souls taken in the trap tonight! If God does not bless the word, and make it so potent that some of you shall really close in with the gospel proclamation, and enter into eternal life, I shall be heavy of heart.

Before I attempt to deal with my text, let me describe to you the plan of salvation. You know it, most of you. Oh that we could get at the thousands of London who do not know it! The multitudes that never enter a house of prayer or yield attention to the gospel message! Our heart yearns over them; but what more can we do for them? They are perishing in willful ignorance. Thanks be to God that so many are here tonight! I will seize the opportunity to declare the plan of grace. Though so many of you know it, let me tell it to you again. By sin, by unrighteousness, by violation of God's law, we have broken our peace with God. We are lost, for He must punish sin. It is not possible that He should be the righteous governor of the universe, and allow sin to go unpunished! To punish sin is no arbitrary purpose of an angry God. It is inevitable in the universe that where there is evil, there should be suffering. If not in this life, yet in another life, which will shortly succeed that which now is, every transgression must receive

its meet recompense of reward! The question is, how can we be forgiven? How, consistently with divine justice, can our iniquities be blotted out? This is not an impossible problem left for us to work out—God’s way of peace is made clear by divine revelation. God, in His infallible word, has told us the means and appliances by which guilty sinners can be made righteous before Him. And, instead of being driven from His presence at the last, he may be accepted and dwell at His right hand! He tells us that inasmuch as the first sin that ruined us was not ours, but Adam’s, and by the transgression of one man we all fell, so it became possible for Him, in consistency with justice, to ordain that another man should be forthcoming in whom we may rise and be restored! That other man has come—“the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.” But the task of lifting up was much harder than that of casting down. A mere man could ruin us, but a mere man could not redeem and rescue us.

Therefore, God Himself, the ever blessed, clothed Himself with the nature of man, was born of a woman, lay in Bethlehem’s manger, lived here on earth a life of humiliation and self-denial, and at the last, took upon Himself the sins of men in one vast load. Even as the fabled Atlas was said to carry the world upon his shoulders, so He took sin and guilt upon Him and bore it in His own body on the tree. Jesus hung on the cross as the substitute for our entire race that ever will believe on Him, and then and there He put away, by His suffering, all the transgression and iniquity of believing men so that now we can preach to mankind and say, “He that believes in Him is not condemned. He that believes on the Son of God has everlasting life.” When you go to a foreign city for the first time, and stay at an inn, it may be that you miss your way when you go out, and are not able to get back again as easily as you wish. It is generally expedient, therefore, for travelers to learn the main streets of every town which they visit. In Rome we come to know which way the Corso runs, and when we get an idea of the run of that main thoroughfare we by-and-by are able to pick our way through the city. Now, the main street of the gospel is *substitution*. “He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” The main street of the gospel runs crosswise; follow it, and you will know the ins and outs of the other great streets before long. This is the High Street of the City of Grace—“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” Christ stood in our place, and suffered that we might not suffer. He “died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” Whoever believes in Christ is saved from the damning power of sin, and delivered from the wrath to come. Take this fact in all its breadth and length; and never doubt it, and you have the key of the gospel. Whoever, I say, trusts his soul with the Lord Jesus Christ, relying on that sacrifice which He offered, and that death which He endured, is saved! Let him not doubt it. He has God’s word for it—let him believe it and rejoice in it. “Whoever believes in Him is not condemned,” for, “like as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so has the Son of man been lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Simple, child-like reliance upon the Lord Jesus gives immediate and complete salvation to the trustful soul!

Well, that is the main street of the city. Now how to get into it is the question; and I earnestly desire, and devoutly hope to be the means, if God will help me, of leading some there. May the Holy Spirit now bear witness with the truth of God, and make it the power of God unto salvation! Our text says, “Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you.”

Our first point is that *some who are seeking Christ greatly need comforting*. Secondly, *their very best comfort lies in the fact that Jesus calls them*. But, thirdly, *if they take the comfort of that call, it urges them to immediate action*—“Arise.” “Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you.”

I. First, then, MANY PERSONS WHO ARE REALLY SEEKING THE SAVIOR GREATLY NEED COMFORTING.

I know there are many such here tonight. You long after everlasting life. God has worked in you a desire to be reconciled to Him, but you need encouraging, for you labor under a sort of undefined fear that these good things are not for you. Partly your conscience, partly your unbelief, and partly Satan—these three have joined together to throw a darkness over you, and you really think that you cannot be forgiven. You would not like to put it into exactly those words, but such is the tenor of your thoughts. There is a hazy idea about you that there are many very good saintly people who will be saved, and, indeed, that there are some great transgressors who will be saved; but you do not think that *you* can be.

Oh that I could destroy that unbelieving thought! There is salvation, there is mercy, there is forgiveness, and it is *free* to every soul that will come and take it! It is as free as the air you breathe, or as the water leaping from the street fountain yonder. “Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” You are mistaken in your gloomy reflections! You write bitter things against yourself, but God has not written them! What if you should take heart and get hope—“Perhaps I may tonight find eternal life. Perhaps I may tonight go out of this house relieved of the burden of my sin”? It would be a good beginning if you had such a hope, but you may with confidence go a great deal further than that!

It may be that *you are cast down because you think that you have been seeking in vain*. You began to pray a few months ago, young man, and I am glad to hear of it! But you have not yet obtained peace. Do not give up praying! I know you are discouraged, but do not cease seeking! I, myself, was for many months an earnest seeker after God by the way of prayer. I thought that by importunate prayer I should find pardon. I did not understand that He had said, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.*” So I set to work *praying*. Nevertheless, I am thankful that I did not cease from prayer, though it often seemed as if I wasted my words, and spent my tears for nothing. Be not discouraged! This blind man was not heard at first, though he cried earnestly. He had to cry for sight again and again, increasing in vehemence each time. Do not be driven to despair! There may be delays, but there shall never be denials to those who cry in earnest! Be of good comfort. Press on, dear heart, press on, and you shall find peace and comfort!

Perhaps, too, you are sad because there are many round you who discourage you. They tell you there is nothing in religion. How should they know? Theirs is a strange infatuation. There are a great many individuals in the world who are considered to be honest in business; you would take their note of hand, and you would trust their word about any goods they were selling. And yet when these good folks begin to say that they are conscious of a new life within them, that they have found out that God is real and spiritual—and that they have received a Spirit which dwells within them, or that they commune with God; straightway a number of people say that it is not true! In effect they are calling them liars. But *why* not true? On what ground are they to be discredited? Simply because the aforesaid people who deny it say that they never saw such a thing themselves, and never felt such a thing themselves? But if there were a world full of blind people, and among them a few persons blessed with sight, whose eyes had been opened; if these began to talk of sunlight and color, all the blind men might say, “It is not true!” Why? “Because we never saw the sunlight or the color!” Does that prove that it is not true? Though you do not possess the faculties of vision, others do; if those men are honest in other things, they have as much right to be believed in this thing as in the rest. We solemnly assert that there is something real in religion! It is not a creed, alone; it is a life!

The regenerates belong to a new creation. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature with new faculties, and new powers, so that he is introduced into altogether a new world. Do not believe those, then, who tell you that there is nothing in it, for they do not know, and, therefore, are not fair witnesses! They can witness to nothing but the fact that they are not in the secret. The man who was brought up for a murder which was sworn against him by six witnesses, said that he ought not to be condemned, because he could bring 60 witnesses who did not see him do it. Of course he could! And so we can bring 60,000 people to say there is no spiritual life because they have never felt it! What does that prove? It only proves that they know nothing about it! But if you bring a few; even though they should be but a few straightforward, honest, simple-minded people whom you would believe in other things, you are bound to accept their testimony about this! There is something real in faith in Jesus! There is a peace which passes all understanding obtained through pardoned sin. There is a new birth, for we have felt it! There is a new life, for we enjoy it! There is a joy that leaps over earth’s narrow bounds. There is a rest of heart akin to the rest of the blessed in heaven, and it can be enjoyed here and now! Thousands of us bear witness that it is so! Do not be discouraged then, for we tell you no old wives’ fables, but the very truth of God which we have, ourselves, tasted and handled! You that are seeking after eternal life need not be baffled by skeptics; we are true men, and tell you what we have proved for ourselves. You will yet find it to be as God declares.

One reason why you have not obtained comfort is, perhaps, *because you do not know the entire gospel yet*. Good news half told may often seem to be bad news. I have read that in the days of the flag and light signals, a message came across to England concerning the Duke of Wellington, and half the message was read as it appeared, and astonished all England with the sad intelligence. It ran thus, “Wellington defeated.” Everybody was distressed as they read it, but it so happened that they had not seen the entire message. Fog had intervened, and when, by-and-by, the air was clearer, and the lights flashed out a second time, it was read thus—“Wellington defeated the French”—quite another thing! It was quite the reverse indeed of what half the message had led men to fear. Thus when you hear half the gospel, it may appear to condemn you; but you have only to hear the other half to find out its encouraging tidings. I would say be diligent in hearing the gospel. Be diligent in searching it out in the sacred book which God has given us. And when you know the truths of God more fully, you will find faith comes to you by the hearing, and the understanding of the word of God. Leave those ministers who preach only a portion of the gospel; try to know all the message of love, and you will, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, soon lose your fears.

Do you not think, too, that some seekers miss comfort because they *forget that Jesus Christ is alive*? The Christ of the Church of Rome is always depicted in one of two positions—either as a babe in His mother’s arms, or else as dead. That is Rome’s Christ! But our Christ is alive. Jesus who rose has “left the dead no more to die.” I was requested in Turin to join with others in asking to see the shroud in which the Savior was buried. I must confess that I had not faith enough to believe in the shroud, nor had I curiosity enough to wish to look at the fictitious linen. I would not care a penny for the article even if I knew it to be genuine! Our Lord has left His shroud and sepulcher, and lives in heaven! Tonight He so lives that a sigh of yours will reach Him, a tear will find Him, a desire in your heart will bring Him to you! Only seek Him as a loving, *living* Savior, and put your trust in Him as risen from the dead no more to die, and comfort will, I trust, come into your spirit.

Perhaps, too, *you have a notion that conversion is something very difficult*. A young woman came to me the other day, after a service, to ask me whether I really meant what I said when I declared that he that believed in Jesus Christ was saved then and there. “Yes,” I said, and I gave her the Scriptural guarantee for it. “Why,” she said, “my grandfather told me that when he found religion, it took him six months, and they had nearly to put him into a lunatic asylum, he was in such a dreadful state of mind.” “Well, well,” I said, “that sometimes happens. But that *distress* of his did not save him! That was simply his conscience and Satan keeping him away from Christ. When he was saved, it was not by his deep feelings—it was by his *believing* in Jesus Christ.” I then went on to set Christ before her as our only ground of hope in opposition to inward feelings. “I see it,” she said! And I rejoiced as I noticed the bright light that passed over her face—a flash of heavenly sunlight which I have often seen on the countenances of those who have believed in Jesus Christ; when peace fills the soul even to the brim, and lights up the countenance with a minor transfiguration. It is so. You have but to trust Christ and it is done! But you are afraid. Have you ever heard of the man who lost his way, one night, and came to the edge of a precipice, as he thought, and fell over? He clutched at some old tree, and hung there, clinging to his frail support with all his might, for he felt that he should be dashed to pieces if he fell. There he hung till he got into a desperate state of fever, and his hands could hold his body no longer! So at last he dropped and fell—about six inches, onto a smooth mossy bank where he lay, altogether unhurt, and quite safe. Now, there are many who think that sure destruction must await them if they confess sin, and resign all into the hands of God. It is an idle fear! Give up your hold upon everything but Christ, and drop down! Soft and mossy shall the bank be which receives you! Jesus Christ, by His love, and by the efficacy of His precious blood, shall give you immediate rest and peace. Only drop now. Drop down at once! This is the major part of faith—the giving up of every other hold, and simply falling upon Christ. That dropping down will bring you present salvation.

II. Now, in the second place, the greatest comfort which I can very well conceive is that which is conveyed in the text. It is this—“BE OF GOOD COMFORT, RISE; HE CALLS YOU”—a good word for the blind man, for he knew that Jesus did not call him to mock him, and that He did not say, “come here” that He might merely tell him, “your eyes cannot be opened.” Jesus did not call him to sport with

him, and send him away disappointed. Christ's calls are honest calls, and guarantee blessing to those who accept them.

Now, beloved friends, there are two calls mentioned in Scripture. The one is the *general call* of the gospel, and the other is the *effectual call*, the personal call, by which men are saved.

The *general universal call ought to yield great comfort to any seeking soul*. In the word of God, you, dear hearer, are called to come to Christ, even you! Why do I know that? Because when Jesus gave the commission to His disciples, He said, "Go you into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." You are a creature, are you not? Well, then, you must be included in that range! We are to preach the gospel to you. And then again, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." You are a sinner, are you not? Do you admit that? Very well, then, according to the text that faithful saying is to be addressed to *you*. And you, dear seeker, feel a burden upon your soul, do you not? You are laboring hard to get salvation. Therefore, the gospel call must be addressed to you. "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Indeed there are many such calls, but there is another which must include you—"Whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." Are you willing to come? Then you are undoubtedly called to come to Christ! Should not that fact comfort you? Remember, as I have already said, He does not call you to mock you, or invite you to come without intending to bless you. Oh hear His honest call! Pluck up courage and come to Him!

Nobody feels any trouble about going where there is a general invitation. Did you ever cross the Mont St. Bernard? If so, I do not suppose you needed much pressing to turn into the hospice there, and spend the night! When they came out, and told you that everybody was welcome, rich and poor, and that travelers nearly all stayed there, you turned in! I went the other day to St. Cross Hospital, near Winchester, which some of you may know. There they give away a piece of bread to everybody who knocks at the door. I knocked as bold as brass. Why shouldn't I? If they gave the bread away to everybody, why should not I have my piece? And so, of course, the hatch was opened, and I had my little piece of bread with the friends who were with me. It was a gift to be given to everybody that called. I did not humble myself particularly, and make anything special of it. It was for all, and I came and received as one of the people who were willing to knock. Now, even so, if the gospel is to be preached to every creature, why do you stand higgling and haggling when you need the bread of life? Why should you waste time in raising question after question when you only need to take what Jesus freely gives? I guarantee you do not raise such quibbles against yourselves in money matters! If an estate is bequeathed you, you do not employ a solicitor to hunt for flaws in the title, or to invent objections to the will! Why do men raise difficulties against their own salvation, instead of cheerfully accepting what the infinite mercy of God so graciously provides for all who with broken hearts and willing minds are ready to take what God the ever-bountiful is so pleased to give?

The invitation is so large, and there is this to be noted concerning it, *No one was ever refused yet!* There is a well-known institution in London which bears across the front of it, "No destitute boy ever refused." Well may we put this over Christ's great house of mercy—"No destitute *soul* ever refused." I can imagine two boys standing on the pavement in front of Dr. Barnardo's institution, and one saying to the other, "Can we go in there?" "Yes," says the other, "I should rather think we could. We are destitute, aren't we? Look here, my clothes are all in rags, and I have not a penny in the world, and no father and no mother. I slept under a dry arch last night. I am a destitute boy, and no mistake of that." I can only suppose that the other might boastfully say, "I ain't destitute, not I! I can earn my living any day, and I have got a half-crown in my pocket." Now, that fellow has no claim to be admitted because he is not destitute. But the boy who is hungry and ragged, and homeless is sure to be welcomed. As he reads those lines, "No destitute boy ever refused," he says, "There is hope for me, then." Now, then, destitute soul, Jesus Christ never refused one like you yet! If you have a store of merit of your own—if you believe you can be saved by your good works; you do not come under the heading of "destitute." "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." But if you are stripped of all boasting; if you are brought to bankruptcy as to personal merit; if you have come down to absolute poverty as to any

hope in yourself, then, as no destitute soul ever was rejected or ever shall be, come to Jesus at once! Come at once, I say. “Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you.”

But, dear friends, I said that there was another and *an effectual call*. That call the Holy Spirit directs to individuals, and when it comes it is *not* resisted, or if resisted for a while, it is ultimately yielded to, so that the man is compelled to come. O Holy Spirit, give that call tonight! There were two brothers fishing, and Jesus said to them, “Follow Me.” They threw down their nets, and followed Him. Matthew was sitting at the receipt of customs with his pen behind his ear, and his account books before him. Jesus said, “Follow Me.” Up Matthew rose, and followed Him at once. That little fellow, the tax gatherer, had climbed up a tree because, being short of stature, he could not see over the heads of the crowd. While he was looking down from among the leafy branches, the Master stood at the bottom of the tree and said, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide in your house.” Down came Zacchaeus! How could he help it? The Spirit of God had given the effectual call, and Christ was in that man’s house shortly after; and the man gave abundant evidence of a change of heart. Oh, may the eternal Spirit speak in that fashion to some here present, so that they may at once yield and follow Jesus Christ!

That call, wherever it comes, *casts a sweet softness over the soul*. The man cannot make it out, but he feels so differently from what he did before. The iron sinew of his neck is gone. The cold stone within his breast has melted into flesh. He listens to the gospel which once he despised. Listening, he thinks; and it is a grand matter to get a man to think about himself, his God, eternity, heaven, hell, the Redeemer. As he thinks, he sees his life in a different light. He perceives that there has been sin in it—very much more of sin than he ever thought could have been there, and as he sees his sin, he mourns over it. He almost wishes that he had never been born rather than have transgressed as he has done. His heart softens under the influence of the law of God. He lays aside his proud boasts, and confesses that he is full of transgression and sin. Next to this thoughtfulness and repentance comes a little hope; he perceives that there is a salvation worth having, and he asks himself why he should not have it. Then comes faith; he perceives that Jesus is the Son of God, and he says to himself, “If He is divine, He can save even me!” He trusts, and as he trusts, the darkness which enveloped him begins to disappear. He obtains a little light, and yet a little more! And at last he cries, “I do believe that Jesus died for me. I rest my soul in His pierced hands. I am forgiven; I am saved!” That man has been called by the blessed Spirit!

It is very strange, too, how God calls some men. I have known it happen many times in this Tabernacle. I have been preaching, and I have made a remark which has suited the case as well as if I had been that man’s companion or better. How was it? I will tell you. God had been at work on that man, and He led His servant to work to the same point. The Lord was, by His providence, tunneling one side of the mountain of the man’s indifference, and then He set me to work on the other side by guiding me in my thoughts so that I preached the gospel in a suitable manner. Just as when they made the Mont Cenis tunnel, one set of engineers were boring one way, and one set the other way—and then they met in the heart of the great mass. A pious mother has been boring away at the mountain by her entreaties, or an earnest Christian teacher, or a wife or a sister has been at the same work. Perhaps sickness, like the diamond boring rod, has been piercing into the man, and then, at last, in this place, the word of the Lord has exactly hit the case so that the tunnel through the soul has been completed, and eternal salvation has been the result! Perhaps the chance words of this night are no chance words to some of you now present, but the very words of God sent straight to your soul! O God, grant that it may be so, and You shall have the praise. O eternal Spirit, thus let it be!

III. Now, lest I weary you, I am going to close with the third head which is THE COMFORT DRAWN FROM OUR CALLING SHOULD LEAD TO IMMEDIATE ACTION. “Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you.”

That exhortation to rise means instant *decision*. You have been hesitating and hanging like the scales of a balance, trembling between heaven and hell. Which is it to be? May the Holy Spirit call you so that it shall be Christ, salvation, and eternal life! I am not always sorry when men grow angry while hearing a sermon. The worst thing that can happen to me tonight is for you all to be satisfied! But when some people get very angry they will *think*—and thinking they will *feel*—and feeling they may turn to God.

Despite their anger they will come again. The hook is in the man's jaws. We shall have that fish! Let him draw out the line further and further, for it will hold him. Let him have play. We shall have him back, again, before long. Have the landing net ready! There is nothing better for some men than to have their antagonism to the gospel awakened for a time. The truth of God has come home to them. It is at work on them, and before long, we trust the blessed work will be complete, and the soul will be saved! This is the point aimed at.

"Rise," says the text. That is, do not let it be any longer a question, "Shall it be?" or, "Shall it not be?" but decide tonight, "It shall be! By the grace of God I will be a Christian. By the grace of God, if there is salvation to be had, I will have it." I do not ask you to come to that decision for the mere sake of making a decision which you will cordially adopt, and then carelessly forget. But I ask the grace of God to lead you to say with purpose of heart, "It shall be." Alas, very many of you come and go! You hear and hear without profit; for it ends in hearing and never ripens into decision. Too many of our regular hearers still remain unconverted, though occasional hearers have been saved. When you take hold of a piece of India rubber, you may make any impression that you like all over it, but finally it resumes its old shape. There are hosts of hearers of that kind—very impressible, but they quickly return to their old tastes and habits. But you meet with other people who seem to be hard as rock. I have observed some who have sat in the aisle biting their lips who have never intended to believe the gospel—and yet with one blow of the Master's hammer; their hearts have gone to shivers at once! Their armor of resistance, and their mail of defiance have been broken through; and they have proven afterwards the heartiest and most earnest of Christian converts! That is an unfortunate impressibility which ends in indecision. Those who show this plastic character mean to be right, but they manage to remain in the wrong. They intend to go to heaven, but, alas, alas, little hope is there that they will ever reach the city of the blessed. The probabilities are against it—they have passed so many years in procrastination that their indecision has become chronic, and fettered them to their sins! After the many seasons in which fair leaves have disappointed the hope of sweet fruits, our despondency is, we fear, the herald of their despair. There seems so little probability that they will ever decide for God and for His Christ that we scarcely hope with trembling; no, we tremble to hope! Would God it were not so.

Oh dear friends! I pray you listen to the text. "Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you." Rise! Rise to something more than decision; rise to resolution! You have all heard of the poor woman who could not get justice done her by the judge. She called on him a great many times, but he would not listen to her. At length she made up her mind that he should attend to her. So she was present on the first court day, and as soon as the judge came in she rose and said, "My lord____" "Have I not told you not to trouble me?" "But, my lord," she cried again. "I tell you to sit down." She sits down, but before the court is up, she says, "Can't I have a hearing?" "I cannot attend to you now, my good woman." But when the judge comes out of court to go home, there she is, standing at the carriage window, saying, "When will you hear my case? There are my poor children starving." She goes to the judge's house, and knocks at untimely hours. "Who is it?" the judge asks. And his servants tell him, "It is that poor woman who wants her case to be heard." He bids them chase her from his gate. She goes home, sad but determined, and the next morning she is in court again. The unjust judge had commanded the ushers not to let her in, but she has entered somehow, and the first thing that is heard is that shrill voice—"My lord, will you hear me?" At last he grows tired, and he says, "Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her." And he does avenge her! Though the just God bears no resemblance to an unjust judge, yet the widow's importunity that prevailed in the teeth of such unpromising surrounding may urge you to incessant prayer! Treat the great God with the importunity which Christ, by so bold a simile, counsels and commends. Say thus to yourself—"I cannot perish. But I must perish if I do not have salvation; and therefore I will have it! I will die at the foot of the cross if die I must, but I will have it."

It happened to me some few years ago to have to lecture at the City Hall, Glasgow. I went at the hour appointed to keep my engagement and the Provost of Glasgow went to the hall with me, but the policeman said that he could not let us in, for we had no tickets, and his orders were to admit none without them. That was a pretty state of things. So the Lord Provost said, "But you must let us in." The

policeman said that he could not, no matter who we were. I said, “This is the Lord Provost,” but the policeman said he did not know that, neither did he care who he was; he should not let us pass against rules. He had received orders from the inspector to let nobody in, and he was sure no Lord Provost would wish him to disobey orders. Then the Lord Provost said, “But this is Mr. Spurgeon. He has got to deliver the lecture.” “I cannot help that. I have my orders, and he shall not come in without a ticket.” What do you think we did? Did we take, “No,” for an answer? Not so! We meant to get in. So we talked and parleyed and reasoned, but he, like a good policeman, did his duty, and would take no commands from us which were contrary to orders. There we stopped. At last he was condescending enough to let us send our cards in to his inspector, and straightway we were admitted. Now, if we had taken, “No,” for an answer, and had gone away, I should have had, to this day, the reputation of having gathered the people together to disappoint them! No, I knew I had a right to go in, and I meant to get in—and I did get in. You must do the same. Even though your sin should condemn you, the law should denounce you, and the officer of justice should refuse you and say, “You cannot come in! No sinner comes this way,” yet insist upon it that you are a creature and a sinner; that the gospel is sent to every creature, and especially invites sinners, and therefore you mean to go in to the feast of grace, no matter who may oppose! Stand to it that you will enter, and as surely as God is true, if there is this resolve and perseverance in you, you shall enter into the banquet of love—you shall inherit eternal life, and rejoice forevermore!

But, dear friends, if you get to that decision and resolution, there is one thing more, and that is, *cast away everything that hinders you from finding salvation*. The poor blind man cast away his garment. Now, if you would be saved you must resolve in your soul, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, that every sin and every habit of yours which hinders your finding Christ shall, at once, be given up. There is no pleasure worth keeping at the price of your soul! No sin is worth preserving on any account whatever—let all your old pleasures and habits go! Let them all go, and give yourself up to Jesus Christ! How I wish that many, tonight, might be led to say, “There is salvation, then, for me by believing. I believe that the word of God is true, and I take Christ to be mine.” Give yourselves up wholly to Christ. No half measures! No hesitating and halting now! You know what Cortez did when he went to Mexico, and intended to conquer it? The soldiers that were with him were few and dispirited. The Mexicans were many, and the enterprise very dangerous. The soldiers would have gone back to Spain, but Cortez took two or three chosen heroes with him, and went down to the seaside, and destroyed all his ships. “Now,” he said, we must conquer or die! We cannot go back.” Burn your boats! Get rid of all thoughts of return! Leave sin and abhor it! God help you to do it, for this is His gospel—“Repent and be converted, every one of you.” Forsake sin and believe in Jesus Christ! And let the boats be burned, making this your resolution—that there shall be no going back to sin!

Thus have I told you what should be done, but God alone can make you do it. We can lead a horse to the water, but we cannot make him drink; so we can set the plan of salvation before men, but we cannot induce them to accept it, except only as, in answer to prayer, the eternal Spirit moves in the souls of men. He is moving upon you now! We are conscious that He is brooding over some of you at this hour! Do not resist Him! Yield yourselves wholly to His monitions. As the bulrushes in the stream bow their heads to the passing breeze, so bow before the motions of the ever-blessed Spirit! May He help you to do so, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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